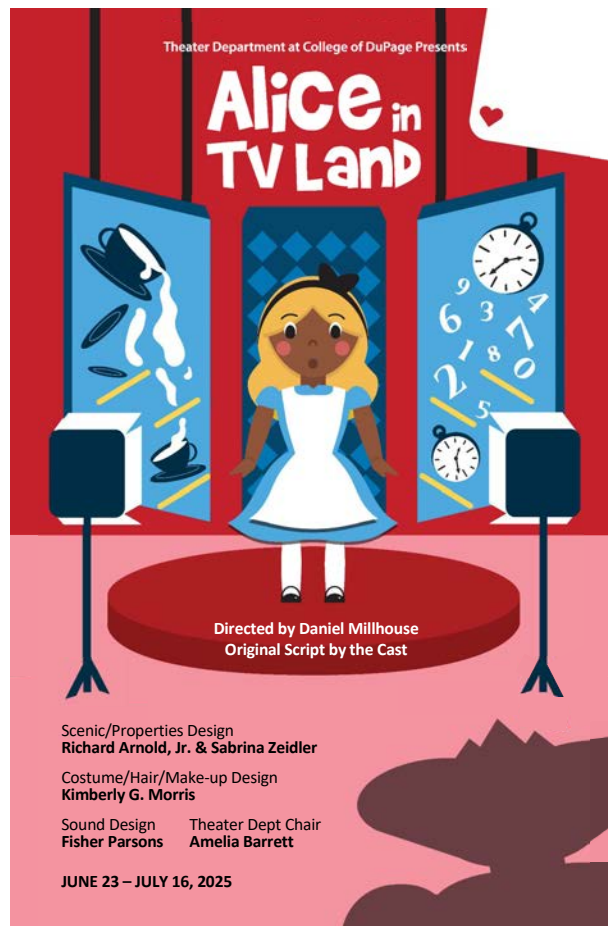


**College of DuPage Theater Department**

**Presents**

***Alice in TV-Land***

**Original Script Created Through Improvisation by the Cast and Director**



**Directed by Daniel Millhouse**

The College Theater Department sincerely thanks the library for research support, for classes studying the script and production, as well as for the cast, director, and production team working on the project.

Special thanks to Student Art Designer: Maritza Valle  
Art Director/Faculty Advisor: Gautam Wadhwa  
Graphic Design Program, COD

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# Play/Production Information

## Brief Synopsis

Lights. Camera. Action! When Alice stumbles into the dazzling world of TV-Land, she is swept into a whirlwind of sitcoms, wacky gameshow hosts, and over-the-top personalities. But when the powerful producer, the Red Queen, starts calling all the shots, Alice must find her voice and stand up for what is right. Break out your TV guide and get ready for a fast-paced, fun-filled adventure where you become the live-studio audience!

## Time and Place

Time: Present

Place: TV-Land

## Characters

The Mad Hatter

Tweedle-Dah

Rolande the Caterpillar

The Cheshire Cat

The White Rabbit

The King of Hearts

Chesster S. Chesley

Alice

Jabberwocky

The Queen of Hearts

## Touring Throughout DuPage County - Locations

Monday	June 23	10:00am	YMCA - Indian Boundaries
Tuesday	June 24	3:00pm	Winfield Public Library
Tuesday	June 24	7:00pm	Glenside Public Library
Wednesday	June 25	4:30pm	Western Springs Rec. Dept
Wednesday	July 2	7:00pm	Wheaton Public Library
Monday	July 14	1:00pm	Oak Brook Library
Monday	July 14	7:00pm	LaGrange Library
Tuesday	July 15	2:00pm	Lisle Library
Wednesday	July 16	7:00pm	Helen Plum Library

## **Admission is free for all performances**

Support is made possible by a generous gift from the College of DuPage Foundation's Dr. Donald and Helen (Gum) Westlake Fund for Student Productions.

For more information, call the MAC Box Office at (630) 942-4000, or visit:

[www.atthemac.org](http://www.atthemac.org)

For more information on College Theater: <https://cod.edu/academics/programs/theater/index.aspx>

## ***Alice in TV-Land* Director's Note**

Summer 2025

Grab the remote and settle in because you are about to be zapped straight into the wild, wonderful world of *Alice in TV-Land*!

This completely original story inspired by *Alice in Wonderland* was created from scratch by our ensemble through improvisation, creativity, and a spirit of joyful collaboration. What began as a blank page quickly transformed into a whirlwind adventure full of quirky sitcoms, zany game shows, and larger-than-life personalities, all surrounding a curious girl named Alice who is learning to find her voice in a world full of noise.

While the laughs are plentiful and the pace is fast, *Alice in TV-Land* carries a heartfelt message at its core: that speaking up for yourself matters, and that real change happens when we listen to each other, work together, and recognize that every voice has value. In a world run by flashy personalities and fast decisions, Alice reminds us that true leadership does not come from being the loudest, but from lifting others up along the way.

Just like Alice, our cast discovered the power of teamwork while creating this show. Every scene, character, and moment onstage was built together, with trust, generosity, and a shared sense of play. In that way, *Alice in TV-Land* is not just a story about finding your voice, it is also about the magic that happens when we realize we are all in this together!

So get ready to laugh, cheer, and maybe even recognize a little of yourself in the world of TV-Land. And remember, you are not just watching the show... you *are* the live studio audience!

Live from DuPage County... It's *Alice in TV-Land*!

# Devising Through Improvisation

## A Note on the Improvisational Process for this Production

I would like to share with you our exploration through the exciting process of creating a theatrical production and its script entirely through improvisation. Here, we will delve into the fascinating world of devised theater and the collaborative efforts that bring a show to life.

- I. The Power of Collaboration:
  - A. Devised theater relies on the collective creativity and input of the entire ensemble. It is a collaborative endeavor where actors, directors, and designers work together to shape the production.
  - B. Through improvisation, performers are encouraged to explore ideas, take risks, and contribute their unique perspectives. This collaborative process fosters a sense of ownership and investment in the final production.
- II. Establishing a Framework:
  - A. While the script is not predetermined in a devised production, it is essential to establish a framework or a general concept to guide the improvisation process. This can be a theme, a specific story, or even a visual inspiration.
  - B. The framework helps focus the improvisation and ensures that the exploration remains connected to the central ideas or objectives of the production.
  - C. For our Framework, we outlined three specific plots/story points to help create a solid foundation.
  - D. After establishing our Framework, we then worked with narrowing down the various themes/lessons we wanted audiences to consider throughout the story.
- III. Character Development:
  - A. Through improvisation, actors have the freedom to develop their characters organically. They can explore their characters' physicality, personalities, and relationships with other characters.
  - B. By embodying their characters and engaging in improvised scenes, actors discover unique nuances, motivations, and quirks that shape their roles in the production.

#### IV. Narrative and Structure:

- A. Devised theater often involves a non-linear or fragmented narrative structure. Improvisation allows the ensemble to experiment with different storylines, plot devices, and theatrical techniques.
- B. Through trial and error, improvised scenes can be refined, rearranged, or discarded to create a cohesive and engaging narrative arc that resonates with the intended audience.
- C. To find the structure, we came up with about 25 different notecards, each containing a specific example or summary of what would happen in a specific scene. Each notecard represented one scene or crucial storytelling moment.

#### V. Refining and Shaping:

- A. The process of creating a devised production is an ongoing journey of refinement. As improvisation progresses, moments of brilliance and inspiration emerge.
- B. Using our Plot Outline, we then created a story board that would break down the overall story arc for those three specific plots we had created.
- C. Directors and ensemble members collaborate to identify and shape these improvised moments into cohesive scenes, dialogues, and even musical numbers.
- D. Rehearsals become a platform for experimentation, feedback, and fine-tuning, allowing the production to evolve and mature.
- E. During rehearsals, we would take a notecard from our storyboard and then assign actors to improvise this "external action". During the improvisation, I would ask a group of 2-3 actors to become the writers and use the improvised scene we witnessed as inspiration to write a full scene around this specific plot point.

#### VI. Audience Engagement:

- A. Devised productions created through improvisation have a unique ability to captivate and engage audiences. The raw and spontaneous nature of the performances can create an immersive experience.
- B. Audiences become active participants, witnessing the development of characters and storylines in real-time, resulting in an immediate and authentic connection.

In conclusion, creating a production and its script purely through improvisation is a thrilling and collaborative endeavor. It offers the freedom to explore ideas, shape characters, and develop narratives in a dynamic and organic manner. Through this study guide, we hope to inspire and empower you to embrace the creative possibilities that devised theater presents.

## Background on College Theater Improvisational Shows

Each summer, the College of DuPage Theater Department creates a fully original touring production geared toward young audiences. These shows are rooted in improvisation and devised theatre techniques, offering our student actors an opportunity to explore character development, physical comedy, and collaborative storytelling.

While we often draw inspiration from familiar fairy tales and fables, the final product is anything but traditional. Each year's concept begins with a central idea or theme proposed by the director, which is developed collaboratively with the cast and creative team. Through improvisational rehearsals and structured writing sessions, the script evolves organically, often undergoing major changes right up to the final weeks before opening.

In recent years, we have brought fresh spins to classic tales:

- *Hare Today, Tortoise Tomorrow* reimagined the classic race set in the 80's as a high school homecoming dance competition with dances and storytelling elements inspired by *Mean Girls: The Musical*.
- *Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Do-Wop* took Cinderella to the 1950s, blending sock-hop flair with themes of empowerment.
- This year's production, *Alice in TV-Land*, throws Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland* into the world of television, complete with a power-hungry Queen of Hearts who cancels all the shows and takes over the remote control. Alice, a modern-day viewer, is transported into the chaos of TV-Land where she joins forces with beloved characters like the Jabberwocky, the Mad Hatter, and the White Rabbit to restore creativity and individuality to the airwaves.

In *Alice in TV-Land*, students not only created original dialogue and scenes, but also helped devise characters, running gags, and TV-themed games, resulting in a final script that blends satire, nostalgia, and heartfelt storytelling. Unlike past years, this production embraced a more contemporary pop culture frame, drawing inspiration from game shows, sitcoms, and cooking competitions, giving the show an extra level of audience engagement and comedic potential.

Audience interaction remains a core part of our touring shows. Whether through direct questions to the crowd, dance parties, or moments where characters seek help from children in the audience, our productions always invite kids (and grownups!) to become part of the action. Playful references to popular media, like "Family Feud" and baking competitions, are used to delight audiences and provide a familiar entry point into each fantastical world.

At its heart, this process celebrates creativity, risk-taking, and ensemble collaboration, skills that are essential not just to performance, but to a life in the arts.

## Background on Improvisation

At College Theater, improvisation is at the heart of our summer touring productions. It is not just a performance technique, it is a creative process that empowers our student actors to generate new ideas, build original characters, and collaborate as an ensemble. Through games, exercises, and spontaneous storytelling, actors learn to trust their instincts, take risks, and respond truthfully in the moment.

Improvisation as a theatrical practice has roots in long-standing traditions of play and storytelling. While it is often associated with sketch comedy today, its foundations are much older. Forms of improvised performance have existed in many cultures, from *commedia dell'arte* in Renaissance Italy to early folk theater around the world. In the 20th century, improvisation began evolving into a training method for actors and a performance form in its own right. Educators and theater-makers began exploring how play-based structures could unlock creativity, build ensemble connection, and help performers develop skills like listening, spontaneity, and emotional truth.

In our program, we use those foundational principles of improvisation to create original youth productions from the ground up. Each summer begins with a simple concept or scenario, developed by the director and design team, and then grows and changes through improvisation. We workshop ideas, explore characters, experiment with structure, and gradually shape the script based on what emerges in the room.

This year's show, *Alice in TV-Land*, reimagined the classic *Wonderland* story through the lens of television genres. What began as a playful idea - what if Alice got stuck inside a TV? - quickly developed into a world filled with parody cooking shows, reality competitions, and canceled cartoons. The students worked collaboratively to shape the narrative, develop original characters, and invent gameshow-inspired segments that turned the audience into active participants. Even the Queen of Hearts' remote and the finale's "Royal Feud" game show grew out of improvised moments during rehearsal.

Throughout the process, students practiced essential acting skills like physicality, vocal clarity, active listening, and emotional commitment, all while playing. And as they worked together, they built more than just a script, they built confidence, friendships, and a sense of creative ownership.

Improvisation, by nature, is transformative. It turns a bare stage into a world of possibilities, and a group of individuals into an ensemble of storytellers. Whether or not our students pursue theater beyond this program, the skills they develop - adaptability, collaboration, communication, and creativity - will serve them far beyond the stage.

That is why improvisation remains the cornerstone of our summer work: it is bold, it is joyful, and it brings everyone - on stage and in the audience - into the story together.

## From *Wonderland* to *TV-Land*: Themes of Imagination, Identity, & Influence

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has captured imaginations for over 150 years, not just because of its curious characters and whimsical settings, but because of the deeper themes it explores beneath the surface. At its heart, *Alice in Wonderland* is a story about a child navigating a world that does not always make sense. The rules are unclear. The people are unpredictable. The logic is often turned upside down. And yet, Alice keeps going, asking questions, using her wit, and trying to make sense of it all.

### Themes from the Original Story

#### Curiosity and Exploration:

- Alice is driven by a deep desire to know more. Her willingness to follow a rabbit, drink unknown potions, and engage with strange creatures reminds us that growth and discovery often come from asking questions and stepping into the unknown.

#### Identity and Growing Up:

- A recurring theme in Carroll's story is Alice's struggle with identity. She literally changes size multiple times, and repeatedly asks, "Who in the world am I?" This reflects the confusing process of growing up - of figuring out who you are in a world that is constantly shifting.

#### Nonsense and Logic:

- Wonderland runs on its own bizarre logic, and characters often twist language and meaning in surprising ways. This theme challenges readers to think critically about rules, authority, and the systems we take for granted.

#### Power and Control:

- Characters like the Queen of Hearts represent irrational power - quick to shout "Off with their heads!" with little reason. Alice's resistance to this kind of control shows the importance of standing up to authority when it lacks fairness or reason.



Publicity Photo for College of DuPage's College Theater's Summer 2025  
Production of *Alice in TV-Land* featuring Costume Design by Kim Morris

## The Power of Television

In *Alice in TV-Land*, these classic themes are reimagined through a modern lens: television. Just like Wonderland, TV-Land is a strange, colorful world with larger-than-life personalities, shifting realities, and a powerful figure trying to control the narrative.

Television has an enormous influence on how we see the world. It entertains, educates, and shapes our opinions, sometimes without us even realizing it. That is why it is such a fitting setting for a new version of Alice's journey.

In our show:

- The Queen of Hearts controls everything through a magic remote, symbolizing how media can be used to manipulate, mute, or reshape voices.
- Characters like the Mad Hatter and Jabberwocky have lost their shows, reflecting how creative voices can be pushed aside when popularity or power becomes the goal.
- Alice, the viewer, becomes the only one who can restore balance - by being curious, brave, and willing to stand up for originality and self-expression.

## Why This Story Still Matters:

Whether in a dream world or on a television screen, the journey of discovering who you are, resisting control, and finding your voice is a story that never gets old. *Alice in TV-Land* reminds us that creativity, collaboration, and imagination are powerful tools, not just in theater, but in life.

So next time you pick up a remote or step onstage, think about Alice, and the wonder that can happen when you ask, "What if?"



Publicity Photo for College of DuPage's College Theater's Summer 2025 Production of *Alice in TV-Land* featuring Costume Design by Kim Morris

# The Original Source Material's Author: Lewis Carroll

## About the Author

Lewis Carroll was the pen name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832–1898), an English writer, mathematician, and logician best known for creating the timeless classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Originally published in 1865, the story was inspired by a real girl named Alice Liddell and began as an imaginative tale told during a boating trip. Carroll's work is celebrated for its playful use of language, clever wordplay, and surreal sense of logic, all of which have made *Alice* a beloved story for generations of readers.

In addition to writing fiction, Carroll was a respected mathematician and photographer. His sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass*, continued Alice's adventures in a fantastical world where the rules of reality are bent or broken entirely. Over the years, his work has inspired countless adaptations across theater, film, and television - including this summer's playful reimagining, *Alice in TV-Land*, which brings his characters into the modern world of game shows and reality TV while honoring the spirit of curiosity and imagination that defined the original.



# Analysis Tools

## Things to Think about Prior to Performance

- What, if any, is the importance of family entertainment?
- How do you expect improvisational theater to differ from traditional scripted work?

## Things to Watch for in Performance

- Why, and how, is the audience directly involved in the production?
- What are the “universal themes” that are reinforced?
- Was the production accessible for young audiences as well as more mature audiences?
- What are the lessons communicated by each of the scenes?
- How were each of the “lessons learned” summed up by characters for each of the main storylines?
- What are the journeys of each of the characters?
- How does the color scheme and costume design heighten the show?
- There are a ton of props used in this play. Do these props help further the plot or character development? How?
- How does the sound design and music help heighten the story?

## Things to Think about after the Performance

- What do you think the core values and then the themes are of this play?
- Was this production accessible to the entire family? If so, how?
- What did you take away from this production experience?
- What were your favorite elements in the production and why?
- How did music affect your experience?
- Did you respond to the characters through verbally, physical, or mental reactions?

## Other Analysis Tools

- What happens in the very last moments of the play? Certainly, the last few minutes, but, more importantly, the last thirty seconds? In that time, WHAT happens or is said, and what does that say about what the play is “about”? In a nutshell, how do the cast/characters drive their point(s) home?
- And what is the significance of the title? Why did the Director and Cast decide that this was the most quintessential title for this work?

## Additional Information

The running time for this production is approximately 45 minutes. There is no intermission.

*Alice in TV-Land* is appropriate for all ages.

We love to have audience participation in our improv shows - feel free to join in on the fun!

We also encourage everyone to enjoy a fun-filled evening by attending *Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* to take full advantage of our College Theater Summer Repertory experience (July 11 - July 20, 2025) at The Belushi Performance Hall at The MAC.

For tickets and more information, please contact the College Theater's Box Office at (630) 942-4000 or visit: <https://atthamac.org/events/rogers-hammersteins-cinderella/>

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**Please join us!**